

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 002641

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TW, UK

SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF BRITISH GOVERNMENT PROPERTY ON

REFERENCES: (A) HONG KONG 13445

-- (B) TAIPEI 7381

-- (C) STATE 224059 OF 12/11/72

-- (D) STATE 16341 OF 1/26/73

1. EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT'S FILES IN RESPONSE TO REFS A AND B REVEALS THAT BRITISH, IN REQUESTING US REPRESENT CERTAIN UK INTERESTS ON TAIWAN (REF C), MENTIONED THEY WOULD WISH US "TO TAKE ON EVENTUALLY" ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISPOSAL OF SO-CALLED OLD DUTCH FORT, INCLUDING FORMER UK CONSULATE AND CONSUL'S RESIDENCE. BRITISH ADDED THEY "WOULD GLADLY ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY LEGAL FEES ARISING IN CONNECTION WITH, FOR EX-
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AMPLE, THE SALE OF PROPERTY ... PERFORMED ON (THEIR)

BEHALF." (PARAS 3 AND 6, REF C)

2. IN OUR RESPONSE TO BRITISH AGREEING TO REPRESENT CERTAIN OF THEIR INTERESTS ON TAIWAN (REF D), DEPTOFF STATED "USG HOPED THAT UK WILL BE ABLE TO RESOLVE PROBLEM OF DISPOSAL OF ITS REMAINING ASSETS ON TAIWAN, CHIEFLY FORMER BRITISH CONSULATE, THROUGH SERVICES OF ITS 'HONORARY LEGAL ADVISOR' OR OTHER PRIVATE REPRESENTATIVES. (BUT) SHOULD MATTERS ARISE IN CONNECTION WITH DISPOSAL OF THESE ASSETS WHICH PRIVATE PERSONS COULD NOT HANDLE, USG STANDS WILLING TO OFFER ITS GOOD OFFICES TO ASSIST HMG IN COMMUNICATING WITH GRC ON THIS MATTER." (PARA 3, REF D)

3. WE ARE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN ACCEDING TO RECENT BRITISH REQUEST (REF A) AND WE DO NOT WISH TO END UP IN THE CLASSICAL POSITION OF MIDDLEMEN WHOSE EFFORTS TO RECONCILE OPPOSING POSITIONS EARNS ENMITY OF BOTH PARTIES.

4. WITH THIS CAVEAT IN MIND, HOWEVER, WE PROPOSE TO OFFER USG MESSENGER SERVICE IN THIS MATTER UNLESS EMBASSY TAIPEI HAS OVERRIDING OBJECTION. WE WOULD DO SO IN RECOGNITION OF THE SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE BRITISH HAVE GIVEN US WITH USG PROPERTIES ON CHINA MAINLAND SINCE 1949 -- AND AT SOME POLITICAL COST TO THEMSELVES. WE WOULD MAKE THIS OFFER WITHOUT ASKING BRITISH TO FIRST EXHAUST POSSIBLE PRIVATE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATING WITH GROC.

5. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, WE WOULD UNDERSTAND MESSENGER SERVICE TO MEAN SOMETHING MORE THAN SERVING AS MERE CONDUIT OF INFORMATION IN BOTH DIRECTIONS -- BUT NOT MUCH MORE. IT IS OUR INTENTION THAT EMBASSY WOULD PERFORM THOSE SERVICES THE BRITISH MIGHT FIND HELPFUL -- AND CHINESE NOT OFFENSIVE -- WITHOUT BECOMING DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PROPOSED TRANSACTION. (FYI. GIVEN LIKELY EARLY AND LASTING STANDOFF BETWEEN GROC AND HMG IN THIS MATTER, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT US ROLE TO BE MUCH MORE THAN OCCASIONAL MESSENGER. END FYI)
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6. FOR HONG KONG. UNLESS EMBASSY TAIPEI DEMURS, CONGEN SHOULD INFORM COLEMAN THAT USG, THROUGH EMBASSY TAIPEI, WILLI G TO OFFER MESSENGER SERVICE IN PROPOSED SALE OF TAMSUI PROPERTIES. THIS OFFER MADE OUT OF SENSE OF APPRECIATION FOR PAST BRITISH HELPFULNESS WITH USG PROPERTIES ON MAINLAND. WE WOULD LIKE IT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD AT OUTSET, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD VIEW EMBASSY

ROLE AS MAINLY ONE OF FACILITATING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROC AND HMG, LEAVING JUSTIFICATION OF CLAIMS, MAKING AND ACCEPTING OF OFFERS, SELECTION OF COUNSEL AND REVIEW OF HIS WORK, ETC., TO HMG. HMG SHOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT WE WOULD EXPECT IT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY COSTS INVOLVED AND THAT WE WOULD MAKE NATURE OF USG ROLE CLEAR TO GROC FROM BEGINNING.

7. FOR TAIPEI. IF CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN PARA 6 ARE ACCEPTABLE TO HMG, EMBASSY SHOULD CLARIFY OUR ROLE TO GROC AND PROCEED WITH DELIVERY OF UK PROPOSAL MENTIONED IN REF B TO CHINESE AUTHORITIES. KISSINGER

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